

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 308574
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:JTHYDEN

APPROVED BY: S/S-O:JTHYDEN

-----025746 282217Z /73

O 282111Z DEC 77 ZFF4

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 308574

NODIS

FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 23122 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO TEL
AVIV 28 DEC 77

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 23122

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

FROM USDEL CAIRO NO. 0040

FOR INR SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: U.S. ROLE AT JERUSALEM MEETING OF CAIRO
CONFERENCE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

REF: TEL AVIV 11125

1. I ASSUME YOUR MIDDLE EAST GROUP HAS BEEN GIVING THOUGHT
TO THE LEVEL OF OUR "OBSERVER" AT THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND TO WHAT OUR ROLE IN THOSE MEETINGS
SHOULD BE, SO THAT WE CAN MAKE AN EARLY RECOMMENDATION
TO THE SECRETARY. I WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
THIS WITH THE SECRETARY AFTER I JOIN THE PRESIDENT'S
PARTY ON FRIDAY BUT WANTED TO SEND YOU SOME TENTATIVE
THOUGHTS FOR POSSIBLE INCORPORATION INTO WHATEVER
RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BEING PUT TOGETHER IN WASHINGTON.

2. SECRETARY'S PARTICIPATION: BOTH THE ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS HAVE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD BE PRESENT FOR THE OPENING OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE BURDEN THAT ANOTHER TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD PLACE ON THE SECRETARY, I BELIEVE THE SECRETARY SHOULD GO, GIVEN THE DESIRE OF BOTH PARTIES FOR HIM TO DO SO AND THE POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE POSTURE WE HAVE ADOPTED TOWARD THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, AND MORE GENERALLY TOWARD THE SADAT/BEGIN PEACE EFFORTS. SHOULD THE SECRETARY GO TO JERUSALEM FOR THE OPENING, THIS IMMEDIATELY RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HE SHOULD PLAN ANY OTHER MIDDLE EAST STOPS. MY INCLINATION WOULD BE THAT HE SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT GO TO OTHER MIDDLE EAST CAPITALS, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF CAIRO ON WHICH I WOULD THINK WE WOULD WANT TO CONSULT SADAT. THE SECRETARY WILL RECENTLY HAVE SEEN HUSSEIN AND THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP ON THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP. GIVEN OUR DESIRE TO KEEP SYRIA FROM FORECLOSING THE NEGOTIATING OPTION, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM NOT REPEAT NOT TO GO TO DAMASCUS IF HE WENT TO AMMAN AND RIYADH; YET TO GO TO DAMASCUS, GIVEN ASAD'S NEGATIVE POSITION TOWARD THE CAIRO CONFERENCE WOULD GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE HEDGING OUR BETS WITH RESPECT TO THE CONFERENCE AND PURSUING ASAD AT A TIME WHEN NEITHER SADAT NOR BEGIN IS ACTIVELY

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SEEKING SYRIAN PARTICIPATION. A VISIT TO CAIRO IN ADDITION TO JERUSALEM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH A POSTURE THAT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AND ITS COMMITTEES ARE WHERE THE ACTION PRESENTLY IS AND WOULD MAKE SUCH A TRIP BY THE SECRETARY AN UNAMBIGUOUSLY CAIRO CONFERENCE-ORIENTED ONE. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT POSTURE FOR US AT THIS STAGE. OF COURSE, IF HUSSEIN HAD BY JANUARY 15 AGREED TO JOIN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE, A VISIT TO AMMAN WOULD ALSO MAKE SENSE. MY GUESS, HOWEVER, IS THAT HUSSEIN IS GOING TO WANT TO WAIT TO SEE HOW THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE EVOLVES BEFORE MAKING HIS DECISION.

3. QUESTION OF U.S. CONTINUING PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE: THE FIRST DECISION IS WHETHER WE WANT A CONTINUING PRESENCE. I DO NOT THINK THE ISRAELIS WOULD BE DEVASTATED IF WE DID NOT HAVE AN OBSERVER PRESENT BUT MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THE EGYPTIANS ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO SUCH A PRESENCE. AGAIN, GIVEN OUR SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, I DO NOT THINK WE COULD BE ABSENT IN JERUSALEM WITHOUT RAISING

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEGREE OF OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT. IF WE ARE REPRESENTED, I WOULD IN MANY WAYS BE THE LOGICAL PERSON. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE JERUSALEM MEETINGS COULD GO ON FOR A PROTRACTED PERIOD AND I AM NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THIS IS THE BEST ALLOCATION OF MY TIME SO LONG AS I CONTINUE TO HAVE A BUREAU TO RUN BACK IN WASHINGTON. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT OUR ROLE IN JERUSALEM IS (SEE BELOW). ONE POSSIBILITY THAT OCCURS TO ME, HOWEVER, WOULD BE FOR ME TO BE NAMED AS THE U.S. OBSERVER WITH STERNER AND KORN AS ALTERNATES, WITH THE THOUGHT THAT ONE OR THE OTHER OF THEM COULD BE CONTINUALLY PRESENT AND I COULD BE THERE IF THE SUBSTANTIVE SITUATION MADE THAT DESIRABLE.

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4. U.S. ROLE IN JERUSALEM: THIS IS THE PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE WHICH WE NEED TO FOCUS ON BETWEEN NOW AND JANUARY 15. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE DESIGNATION OF "OBSERVER" WAS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE ISRAELI PREFERENCE THAT THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE BE ESSENTIALLY BILATERAL AND THE EGYPTIAN PREFERENCE THAT THE U.S. PLAY A SUBSTANTIVE ROLE. ABDEL MEGUID, WHO WILL BE WITH THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION IN JERUSALEM, HAS SAID QUITE POINTEDLY SEVERAL TIMES TO ME THAT WHILE HE UNDERSTANDS WHY WE PLAYED A LARGELY PASSIVE ROLE DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, HE FEELS WE MUST BE ACTIVE IN THE JERUSALEM TALKS AND STATE OUR POSITION ON ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION THERE. HE HAS SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE HOPES OUR REPRESENTATION IN JERUSALEM WILL INCLUDE LEGAL EXPERTS WHO CAN HELP WITH THE DRAFTING. WHAT HE, AT LEAST, OBVIOUSLY WANTS IS FOR US TO WEIGH IN DURING THE JERUSALEM TALKS WITH POSITIONS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY STATED ON SUCH MATTERS AS WITHDRAWAL WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS ON THE WEST BANK, A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND LINKED TO JORDAN, SELF-DETERMINATION, ETC. IF WE ARE TO PLAY THIS KIND OF AN ACTIVE ROLE, IT WILL CLEARLY HAVE TO BE AT A HIGHER LEVEL AND IN OTHER CHANNELS THAN A U.S. OBSERVER, AT LEAST IN PARALLEL WITH WHATEVER POSITIONS OUR OBSERVER MAY TAKE IN THE TALKS THEMSELVES. THE ISRAELIS, OF COURSE, WANT US TO PLAY NO REPEAT NO SUCH ROLE. MY OWN THOUGHT IS THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE AT LEAST AT THE OUTSET OF THE JERUSALEM TALKS THE RELATIVELY PASSIVE ROLE WE HAVE PLAYED SO FAR, KEEPING IN MIND THAT WE MAY HAVE TO RECONSIDER THAT POSTURE AT SOME POINT BUT THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE A MAJOR POLITICAL DECISION ON OUR PART. SUCH A DECISION WOULD DEPEND ON OUR ASSESSMENT AT

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THE TIME OF ALL OF THE COMPLEX POLITICAL AND PUBLIC
OPINION FACTORS WITH WHICH YOU ARE FULLY FAMILIAR, IN-
CLUDING PERCEPTIONS OF WHERE RESPONSIBILITY LAY FOR
LACK OF PROGRESS IN JERUSALEM IF THAT SHOULD PROVE
TO BE THE CASE. EILTS UNQTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, CAT-B, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SUMMIT MEETINGS, MEETING OBSERVERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE308574
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:JTHYDEN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: N770009-0640
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771211/aaaaaioe.tel
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Reference: 78 TEL AVIV 11125
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 117728
Secure: LOCK1
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040608
Subject: U.S. ROLE AT JERUSALEM MEETING OF CAIRO CONFERENCE POLITICAL COMMITTEE
TAGS: PGOV, US, XF
To: WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4dee5dfc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009